

THE
S O R R O W S
OF
W E R T E R:
A
GERMAN STORY.

— *Tædet cœli convexa tueri.*

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. II.

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W E R T E R, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

20th October, 1771.

I Arrived here yesterday. The minister is indisposed, and will not go out for some days. If he was less peevish and morose all would do well. I see it but too plainly, heaven has destined me to severe trials : but I won't be disheartened ; one may bear any thing with a little levity. I can scarcely help smiling at the

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word

word which has just escaped me ; a little of that levity, which I am totally without, would make me the happiest of men. And must I despair of my faculties, and of the gifts of nature, whilst others of far inferior strength and talents are parading before me with the utmost satisfaction in themselves ? Great God ! amidst the blessings thou hast deigned to shower down upon me, why was I not endowed with self-complacency and confidence ? But patience, and all will I hope be better ; for I will own to you, my dear friend, that you were in the right : since I have been obliged to mix continually with other men ;

men; since I have had an opportunity of observing their designs, their conduct, their conversation, I am become more easy, and more satisfied with myself. As we naturally compare ourselves with every thing we meet, our happiness or misery depends on the objects which are brought into comparison with us, and in this respect nothing is more dangerous than solitude. There our imagination, which is ever disposed to rise, takes a new flight on the wings of fancy, and forms a chain of beings, of which we are the last and most inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all seem superior to us; and this

operation of the mind is natural. We are continually feeling our own imperfections; we think we have observed in others qualities which we have not, and conclude they also possess all we have ourselves; and thus we have made a perfect, a happy man:—but such a man exists only in our imaginations.

But when, in spite of weakness and disappointment, we direct our endeavours to one end, and steadily persevere in the pursuit of it, we often find that we have made more way, though continually tacking, than others with all the assistance of wind and tide; and yet that is a true judgment which we form of
our

ourselves from our situation with others, whether we are on a line with them, or before them.

LETTER XXXIX.

10th November.

I Begin to think my situation more tolerable ; I am much occupied ; and the number of actors, and the different parts they play, make a very amusing variety in the scene. I have made an acquaintance with the Count of C—, and I esteem him more and more every day. He is a man of strong understanding and great discernment : but though he sees farther than other people, he is

not therefore cold in his temper and manner ; his sensibility surpasses all his other qualities. One morning that I went to speak to him upon business, he expressed a friendship for me ; by the first word he perceived that we understood each other, and that he might talk to me in a style different from that he made use of with most of the others.

I cannot express the satisfaction I receive from the openness of his conduct with regard to me. It is the greatest of pleasures when a delicate mind thus lays itself open to one.

LETTER

L E T T E R XL.

December 24.

I Foreſaw it; the miniſter occasions me a number of vexations. 'Tis the moſt punctilious blockhead under heaven; he goes on ſtep by ſtep, with the trifling minuteness of an old woman. But how can a man be pleaſed with other people who is never ſatisfied with himſelf? I like to go on with buſineſs regularly and with alacrity; and when it is finiſhed, that it ſhould be finiſhed. But not ſo with him; he is capable of returning my draught to me, and ſaying, “ It will do; but go over it again however, there is always ſome-
 B 4 thing

thing to correct ; one may find a better phrase, or a properer word."—I then lose all patience, and wish myself at the devil. Not a conjunction, not one connecting word must be omitted ; and as to the transpositions, which I like, and which flow naturally from my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every sentence is not expressed exactly in the style of the office, he is quite lost. 'Tis deplorable to have any connection with such a personage.

The only thing which gives me satisfaction, is my intimacy with Count C—. He very frankly told me, the other day, how much he was displeased with the difficulties and
 delays

delays of the minister ; that people of his cast must make every thing troublesome to themselves, and to others : “ But,” added he, “ one must submit, as a traveller that is obliged to climb over a mountain ; if the mountain was not in the way, his road would undoubtedly be shorter and more convenient, but in fine, there it is, and he must go over it.”

The old man perceives the Count's preference for me : it makes him angry. When I am present, he takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count : I naturally take up his defence, and that increases his displeasure. Yesterday I was well aware
that

that when he aimed a stroke at my friend, he meant that it should also hit me.—“ For the common affairs of the world,” said he, “ the Count may do very well ; his style is good, and he writes with facility ; but, like other great geniuses, he has no solid learning.” I longed to strike him ; for to what purpose is argument with such a kind of animal ? However, as that was not possible, I answered, with some warmth, that every respect was due to him, both for his understanding and his character ; that he was the only man I had ever met with, whose extensive genius raised him so high above the common level, and who yet retained all his activity

activity in business. This was algebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew, lest some new absurdity in him should raise my choler too much. It is you that are the authors of my ill-fortune; you, all of you, who forced me to bend my neck to this yoke, and preached activity to me. If the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to town on market-days, is not a more active being than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the cursed galley to which I am now chained.

And distaste and lassitude, those fashionable miseries which reign amongst the silly people who affect an unmixed society; the ambition
of

of rank ! how they toil, how they watch to gain precedence ! What poor and contemptible passions, and how plain to be seen ! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceases to entertain the company with accounts of her family, and her estates. Any stranger who heard her would suppose she was a silly creature, whose head was turned by some slight pretence at least to rank, or the lordship of a manor ; but, still more ridiculous, she is the daughter of a steward's clerk in this neighbourhood ! I cannot conceive how the human race can so debase itself.

I do indeed every day perceive more and more how absurd it is to
judge

judge of others by one's self. And it is with so much difficulty that I stopt the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace, that I very readily leave every one to pursue the path he has chosen; but at the same time I ask a like permission for myself.

These paltry distinctions between the inhabitants of the same town, are what disturb me most. I know perfectly well, that inequality of conditions is necessary, and how much I myself gain by it. But I would not have this institution come in my way and hinder me, when I might enjoy some pleasure, some shadow of happiness upon this earth.

I have

I have lately made an acquaintance with a Miss B. a very agreeable girl; who notwithstanding the formality and stiffness of the people about her, has retained a very easy and unaffected manner. The first conversation we had together, equally pleased us both; and when we parted I desired leave to pay my respects to her; which she granted in so obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the time to avail myself of it. She is not of this place, but lives here with an aunt. The countenance of the old virago displeased me at first sight; however I paid her great attention, and often addressed myself to her. In about

half an hour, I pretty nearly guessed what her niece has since acknowledged. This good aunt, who is in years, with a small fortune, and still smaller share of understanding, has no satisfaction but in the long list of her ancestors ; no protection but her noble birth ; this is the defence, the rampart with which she furrounds herself ; and her only amusement is standing at her window to look down with sovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which pass under it in the street. This ridiculous old woman was formerly handsome, and many a young man was the sport of her caprice : that was the golden age. Her charms faded, she was
forced

forced to accept of an old half-pay officer, and be subservient to his will: that was the age of brass. Now she is a widow, and deserted; was it not for her agreeable niece nobody would take notice of her:—this may truly be called the iron age.

L E T T E R XLI.

January 8, 1772.

WHAT men are these!—Form occupies their own souls: they can employ their time and thoughts for a whole year together, in contriving how to get nearer, by one chair only, to the upper end of the

the table.—And don't call it idleness; for on the contrary they increase their labour, by giving to these trifles the time they ought to employ in business. Last week, in a party upon the ice in sledges, there was a dispute for precedence, and the party was immediately broken up.

The idiots ! they do not see that 'tis not the place which constitutes real greatness : the man who enjoys the highest post very rarely acts the principal part ; many a king is governed by his minister, and many a minister by his secretary. Who is in that case to be accounted the first, and chief ? Is it not the man who has the power or the address to

make the passions of others subservient to his own designs?

L E T T E R XLII.

January 20.

I MUST write to you from hence, my dear Charlotte; from a cottage where I have been obliged to take shelter from a violent storm. In all the time that I have spent in that melancholy town, amidst strangers—strangers indeed to this heart—I have not been impelled to write to you: but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this sort of imprisonment, whilst the snow and hail are driving against my little window, I

find myself restored to you and to myself. The moment I entered, your figure presented itself before my eyes, and the remembrance of you filled my heart. Oh ! my Charlotte, the sacred remembrance ! the tender recollections ! — Gracious Heaven ! restore to me that first moment in which I beheld her !

Could you but see me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex where every thing dissipates and nothing touches me ! My senses are dried up ; my heart is at no time full ; I never shed the soft tears of tenderness ; nothing, nothing touches me. I stand, as it were, before the raree-show ; I see the little puppets move, and I

say to myself it is a deception of optics. I am amused with these puppets, or rather I am myself one of them. I take the hand of the man who stands next to me, I feel that it is made of wood, I shudder and draw mine back. I have found but one being here that is of the same order with you, a Miss B. She resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if indeed it is possible for any thing to resemble you. "Ah!" you will say, "he has learnt to make elegant compliments." And there is some truth in your observation. I have been prodigiously agreeable lately, not having it in my power to be any thing better. I have a great deal

deal of wit too, and the women say that nobody understands better how to deal out panegyric—"and *lies*," you will add, for one always accompanies the other.—But I meant to talk to you of Miss B. She has great sensibility, and a superior understanding; her fine blue eyes shew evident marks of both. Her rank is a burthen to her, and gratifies no one passion of her soul; she would gladly leave this crowd; and we often indulge our imagination in talking, for hours together, of happiness in retired and country scenes, and near you, my dear Charlotte;—for she knows you, she does homage to you; but the homage is not ex-

acted; she loves you; and takes great pleasure in hearing me talk of you.

Oh! why am I not at your feet in your favourite little room, and the dear children playing round us! If their noise became troublesome to you, I would tell them a story, and they would crowd about me with silent attention. The sun is setting; his last rays shine on the snow which covers the face of the country; the storm is over, and I — must return to my dungeon. Adieu! — Is Albert with you, and what is he to you? Fool that I am! should I ask this question?

L E T.

L E T T E R XLIII.

February 17.

OUR minister and I don't seem as if we should continue much longer together: his manner of treating a subject, and of doing business, is so absurd, that I cannot help contradicting him very often, and doing things my own way; and then, of course he thinks them very ill done. He mentioned something of this kind lately in a letter to court, and I had a reprimand from the minister there—very gentle indeed—but still it was a reprimand; and I had resolved to resign, when I received a private letter, before which

I humbled myself, and adored the wife, the noble, the exalted genius which dictated it—which endeavoured to soothe my painful sensibility—expressed an approbation of my schemes, and an opinion of their weight and influence—condescending to enquire into business, as well as to examine the ideas of an impetuous young man. How I am exhorted, not to extinguish this fire, but to soften it, and keep it within due bounds, that it may be productive of good ! So now I am no longer at variance with myself, but settled, determined—at least for a week to come. Content and peace of mind are valuable things,
my

my dear friend ; but if they are precious, they are also transitory.

LETTER XLIV.

February 20.

GOD bless you, my dear friends !
 and may he grant to you that
 happiness which he denies to me !
 I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me.--I waited for the wedding-day to be fixed, and on that day I intended with solemnity to have taken down Charlotte's profile from the wall, and with some other papers to have buried it. You are now united, and her picture still remains there. Well, let it remain. Why should it
 not ?

not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart? Yes, you may allow me to occupy the second place there, and I will, I ought to keep it; I should become furious if she could forget——Albert, that thought is hell.—May you be happy, Albert! —Charlotte, angel of light, may you be the happiest of women!

L E T T E R XLV.

March 15.

I HAVE just had an adventure which will drive me from hence: I lose all patience.—Death!—it is not to be remedied, and you only are the cause of all this;—you that
drove

drove me on, and urged and tormented me;—you that made me take an employment I am by no means fit for. I have great reason now to be satisfied—so have you! But that I may not again be told, that the impetuosity of my temper ruins every thing, I here send you, Sir, a plain and simple narration of the affair, as any mere chronicler of facts would relate it.

The Count of O—likes me, distinguishes me; it is known that he does; I have mentioned it to you a hundred times. Yesterday I dined with him; it was the day on which all the nobility meet at his house. I never once dreamed of the assembly,

bly, nor that we subalterns were excluded. In short, I dined with the Count, and after dinner we went into the hall, and talked and walked backwards and forwards. Colonel B. who came in, joined in the conversation, and the time passed away till the company came. God knows, I was thinking of nothing! when entered the right noble and right honourable Lady of T—, accompanied by her husband and their silly daughter, with her small waist and flat neck; with disdainful looks and a haughty air they passed by me. As I hate the whole race, I intended to go away, and was only waiting, till the Count had disengaged himself

self from their impertinent prate, to take leave, when the agreeable Miss B. came in. As I never see her but with pleasure, I staid and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive till after some time that she seemed a little confused, and did not speak to me with her usual ease of manner. I was struck with it. “Heavens!” said I to myself, “can she too be like all the rest?” I was angry and going to withdraw; but the desire of examining farther into this matter kept me. The rest of the company came. I saw the Baron F—enter with the same coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis the first;

the

the Chancellor, and his wife, who is old and deaf; the Count of I—, whose Gothic dress made a still greater contrast to our modern coats, &c. &c. I spoke to those that I knew amongst them; they were all very laconic in their answers. I was taken up with observing Miss B. and did not see that the women were whispering at the end of the room, and that by degrees the same whispering and murmuring got round amongst the men, and that Madame S. was speaking with great warmth to the Count—(this I have since learnt from Miss B.)—At length the Count came up to me, and took me to the window—“ You know our ridiculous

diculous customs," he said; "I perceive the company is rather displeased at your being here: I would not upon any account—" "I beg your excellency's pardon; I ought to have thought of it before: but I know you will excuse this little inattention. I was going," I added, "some time ago, but my evil genius kept me here;" and smiling, I bowed to take leave. He shook me by the hand in a manner which expressed every thing. I made a bow to the whole illustrious assembly, got into my chaise, and drove to M.—I contemplated the setting sun from the top of the hill.—I read that beautiful passage in Homer, where the honest herdsmen

herdsmen are described receiving the king of Ithaca with so much hospitality ; and I returned well pleased. When I went into the supper-room at night, there were but a few persons assembled, and they had turned up a corner of the table-cloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured Adelin came up to me as soon as I entered, and in a low voice said, “ You have met with a very disagreeable incident.” — “ Who, I ? ” — “ The Count obliged you to withdraw from the assembly.” — “ Devil take the assembly ! ” said I, “ I was very glad to be gone.” “ I am rejoiced,” he said, “ that you look upon the affair in that light ; all that

concerns me is, to find that it is talked of every where already." From that moment I began to think of it in a different manner. All those that looked at me whilst we were at table, I imagined were looking at me on account of this incident; and bitterness entered my heart. And now that I am pitied wherever I go, and hear the triumph of my enemies; who say, "This is always the case with those vain insignificant personages who pretend to despise forms, and want to raise themselves:" with other nonsense of the same kind—I could plunge a dagger into my heart. Say what you will of philosophy and fortitude:

one may laugh at nonsense that has no foundation, but how is it possible to endure that these paltry rascals should have any hold of one?

L E T T E R XLVI.

March 16.

EVERY thing conspires to drive me to extremities. I met Miss B— walking to-day. I could not help joining her, and expressing my sense of her altered manner towards me: “Oh! Werter,” said she, with eagerness, “you who know my heart, how could you so ill interpret my distress? What did I not suffer for you from the first moment I entered
the

the room! I foresaw all that has happened; a hundred times I was upon the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S——s and T——s would quit the assembly rather than stay in your company. I knew the Count could not break with them; and now all the talk”—I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, and asked her what talk? “Oh! how much it has already cost me!” said the amiable girl, and tears came into her eyes.—I could scarce contain myself—I was ready to throw myself at her feet. “Explain yourself,” I cried.—Her tears flowed, and I was quite frantic. She wiped them away without endeavouring to

hide them. "You know my aunt," she continued; "she was present, and, good God! in what a light does she consider the affair! Werter, what lessons have I heard last night and this morning upon my connection with you! I have been obliged to hear you debased and run down; and I could not, I dared not say much in your defence." Every word was a dagger; she did not know that in pity to me she should have concealed all that she informed me of.—She told me too all the impertinent nonsense that would be circulated upon the occasion, and how the malicious would triumph; how they would rejoice that my pride was

was humbled; and how happy it would make them, to see me punished for that want of esteem for others, with which I had been often reproached. This is what she told me, and in a manner which shewed the warmest interest; this is what I was forced to hear—it awakened all my passions, and I still breathe rage and fury. Would that I could find a man who dared banter me on this event!—I would sacrifice him instantly to my resentment; it would be a relief to me to discharge my fury on the first object I met;—a hundred times have I caught up a sword to give vent to my oppressed heart. There is a noble race of

horses, which will instinctively open a vein with their teeth, when they are heated by a long course, in order to breathe more freely—I am often tempted to open a vein, and procure for myself everlasting liberty.

L E T T E R XLVII.

March 24.

I HAVE written to court for leave to resign; and I hope I shall obtain it. You will forgive me for not having previously consulted you. It was expedient for me to leave this place.—I knew all you could alledge in order to induce me to stay, and therefore—I beg of you to soften
this

this news as much as you can to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I can do nothing for myself; how should I do any thing for others? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, that I have stopped short in that career which would have led directly to my being first a Privy Counsellor, and then Minister; and to see me thus returning to my original nothing. Argue on the subject as much as you will, combine all the reasons which should have induced me to stay; I am going, that is sufficient. But that you may not be ignorant where I am going, I shall tell you that here is the Prince of—, who is much pleased with my com-

pany, and who having heard of my intention to resign, has invited me to his country-house, to pass the spring months with him. He assures me that I shall be left quite at liberty ; and as we agree on all subjects but one, I shall venture to accompany him.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

April 19.

I THANK you for your two letters. I waited for my answer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehension lest my mother should apply to the minister, in order to defeat my purpose.

pose. But I have received my dismission : and here it is. I will not tell you with what regret it was given to me, nor what the minister said in his letter to me ; for you would renew your lamentations. The money which I sent to my mother for, I shall not want ; for the hereditary Prince has made me a present—and it was accompanied by a few words which affected me almost to tears.

L E T T E R XLIX.

May 5.

I SET out to-morrow ; and as my native place is but six miles out of the great road, I have a mind to
see

fee it, and call back to my remembrance the happy dreams of my childhood. I shall go in at the same gate which I came through with my mother, when after my father's death she left that delightful retreat to immure herself in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend. You shall hear of my expedition.

L E T T E R L.

May 9.

I Performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity, with all the devotion of a real pilgrim : I was affected much beyond what I expected. Near the great elm, which

which is a quarter of a league from the village on the side of S—, I got out of the carriage, and sent it on before, that alone and on foot I might more fully and without interruption enjoy all my recollections. I was then under the same elm which formerly was the term and object of my walks. How things have since changed ! Then, in happy ignorance, I languished after a world I did not know, and where I hoped to find all the enjoyments my heart so often felt the want of : and now I was returned from that world so much desired ; and what, my dear friend, did I bring back ? Disappointed hopes, unsuccessful plans.

I observed

I observed the opposite mountains, and I remembered how often they had excited my wishes. I used to sit sometimes for whole hours looking at them, and ardently longing to wander under the shade of those woods which make so delightful an object in the distance. With what reluctance I quitted this favourite spot when the play-hour was over, and my leave of absence expired! As I drew near to the village, I recognised all the little gardens and summer-houses that I was acquainted with. I disliked the new ones, as I do all the alterations that have been made since my time. I went into the village, and felt quite at home

home again. I cannot, my dear friend, in detail relate all the circumstances with which I was affected; however interesting they were to me, there would be a sameness in the relation. I had intended to lodge in the market-place near our old house: as soon as I entered, I perceived that the school-room, where we were taught by that good old woman, was turned into a shop. I remembered the sorrow, the dullness, the anxiety, the oppression of heart I had experienced in that confinement. Every step was marked by some particular impression. A pilgrim in the holy land does not meet with so many spots which bring
tender

tender recollections to his mind ; and scarcely feels more devotion. One sensation I will relate, of the thousand I experienced : Having followed the course of the stream to a farm, which was formerly a favourite walk likewise, and where we used to divert ourselves with making ducks and drakes upon the water ; I was most forcibly struck with the memory of what I then was, when I looked at the water as it flowed, and form'd romantic ideas of the countries it was going to pass through. My imagination was soon exhausted ; but the water continued flowing farther and farther, till I was bewildered in the idea of invisible distance.

tance. Exactly such, my dear friend, were the thoughts of our good ancestors.—And when Ulysses talks of the immeasurable sea, and the unlimited earth, is it not more natural, more true, more according to our feelings, than when, in this philosophic age, every school-boy thinks himself a prodigy, because he can repeat after his master that the earth is round ?

I am at present with the Prince at one of his hunting-lodges. He is an honest and unaffected man, and I am very well pleased with him : what I dislike, is his talking of things which he has only read or heard of, and always exactly under
the

the same point of view that they have been presented to him. I am sorry to say that he values my understanding and talents much more highly than that mind, for which alone I value myself—which alone is the source of talents, of happiness, of misery, of every thing — which makes me all I am, and is solely mine.—Any body may know all that I know.

L E T T E R L I.

May 25.

I HAD a scheme in my head, which I intended to conceal from you till it was accomplished ;—now
that

that it has failed I may as well tell it to you. I had a mind to go into the army; I had long been desirous of it, and it was my chief reason for coming here with the Prince. He is a general in the service of the ———. As we were walking just now, I communicated my design to him: he did not approve it; and it would have been madness not to have yielded to his reasons.

L E T T E R LII.

June 11.

SAY what you please, I can stay in this place no longer. What should I do here? I am weary of it.

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The Prince, it is true, treats me in all respects as his equal, but still I am not at my ease here. Besides, we are at bottom very different men. He has a good understanding, but quite of the common kind; and the pleasure I have in his conversation, is only such as I receive from reading a well-written book. I shall stay a week more here, and then travel about again. What I have done best, since I came to this place, are some drawings. The Prince has some taste for the arts, and would have more, if it was not cramped by cold rules and technical terms. I often lose all patience, when with a glowing imagination I am giving to art
and

and nature the most lively expression, and he stops me with learned criticisms, upon which he highly values himself.

L E T T E R III.

June 18.

WHERE am I going? I will tell you in confidence: I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that, I thought it would be expedient for me to see the mines of ——. But 'tis no such thing; I only deceive myself: the real truth is, that I wish to be near Charlotte again. I am not the dupe, of my heart, but I obey its dictates.

L E T T E R L I V .

July 29.

OH ! no ; 'tis well—'tis all well.
 —Me her husband ! Eternal
 Power that gave me being, if thou
 hadst destined such happiness for me,
 my whole life would have been one
 continual thanksgiving ! but I will
 not murmur against thee : forgive
 my tears, forgive my fruitless vows !
 —She might have been mine ; I
 might have folded in these arms all
 that is lovely under Heaven !—My
 whole frame is convulsed when Al-
 bert puts his arm round her waist.

Shall I say it ?—And why should
 I not say it ?—She would have been
 happier

happier with me than with him. Albert was not made for her: he wants a certain sensibility; he wants—in short their hearts do not beat in unison! Ah! my dear friend, how often in reading an interesting passage, when my heart and Charlotte's seemed to meet; and when our sentiments were unfolded by the story and situation of a fictitious character, how often have I seen and felt, that we were made to understand each other! Alas, my friend!—But this worthy man loves her with all his soul; and what does not such love deserve?

I have been interrupted by an insufferable visit. I have dried up my

tears; and my thoughts are a little dissipated. Adieu, my dearest friend.

LETTER LV.

August 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate; men are all disappointed in their hopes, and all their schemes fall to the ground. I have been to see the good woman under the lime-trees. The eldest boy ran to meet me; he screamed for joy, and that brought out his mother. She looked very melancholy. "Alas! my good Sir," said she, "our poor little Jenny is dead;" (that was the youngest of her children). I answered nothing—

"And

“ And my husband,” she continued,
 “ came back from Holland without
 any money : he was taken ill with
 a fever ; and if some good people
 had not relieved him, he must have
 been obliged to beg his bread along
 the road.” I could say nothing to
 her : I gave some money to the
 boy ; and she offered me some ap-
 ples, which I accepted, and full of
 sorrow left the place.

L E T T E R LVI.

August 21.

MY sensations change with the
 rapidity of lightning. Some-
 times a ray of joy seems to give me

new life—Alas ! it disappears in a moment. When I am thus lost in reveries, I cannot help saying to myself —“ If Albert was to die, I should be—yes, Charlotte would ”—and I pursue the chimera till it leads me to the edge of a precipice, from which I start back and shudder. When I go out at the same gate, when I take the same road which conducted me for the first time towards Charlotte, my heart sinks within me ; and I feel with bitterness how different I then was, from what I now am. Yes, all, all is vanished. Not a sentiment, not a pulsation of my heart is the same ; no traces of the past remain. If the shade of a departed prince
could

could return to visit the superb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved son ; and if he found them overthrown and destroyed by a more powerful neighbour, such would be his sensations.

L E T T E R LVII.

September 3.

I Sometimes cannot comprehend how it is that she loves another—how she dares love another, whilst I bear her about me in this heart—whilst she entirely fills and engrosses it—whilst I think only of her, know only her, and have nothing but her in the world.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R L V I I I .

September 6.

IT cost me much to part with the blue frock which I wore the first time I danced with Charlotte; I could not possibly appear in it any longer: but I have made another exactly like it, and with a buff waistcoat and breeches.

It has not however the same effect upon me. I don't know—but I hope in time it will be as dear to me.

L E T T E R

LETTER LIX.

September 15.

ONE is tempted to wish one's self at the devil, when one thinks of all the contemptible beings which Heaven suffers to crawl upon this earth, without any feeling, without any idea of the things which may be interesting to others. You remember the walnut-trees at S. under which I sat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. These beautiful, these beloved trees, how they adorned the parsonage-yard! their shade was refreshing; it was respectable, for it carried one back with pleasing ideas to the good pastors
 who

who planted them. The school-master often mentioned the name of him who planted the oldest of them. He had it from his grandfather. This vicar was an excellent man, and under these trees his respectable memory was ever present to me. The school-master had the tears in his eyes yesterday, when he told us they were cut down.—Cut down ! I could in my fury murder the ruffian who struck the first stroke !—I that should grieve if I had two such trees in my court, and one died of old age ; I must endure this. I have however one consolation—such is sentiment—the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peasants

fants will make no more presents to the vicar's wife, and that she will suffer for the mischief she has done in the parish—for she did it, the wife of the present incumbent (our good old man is dead) a tall, meagre, wrinkled, wan creature, who is so far right to disregard the world, that the world totally disregards her; an antiquated scold, who affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lends her assistance towards the new reformation, moral and critical, of the Christian religion, and shrugs up her shoulders at the mention of Lavater's enthusiasm. Her health is destroyed, and hinders her from having any enjoyment here below.

below. Such a being only could have cut down my walnut-trees. No, I cannot get over it. Would you hear her reasons? The leaves which fell from them made the court wet and dirty; the trees obstructed the light; little boys threw stones at the nuts, and the noise affected her nerves, and disturbed her profound meditations when she was weighing in the balance Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found that all the parish was displeased, and particularly the old people, I asked them why they suffered it?—"Ah! Sir," they said, "when the steward orders, what can we poor peasants do?" How-

ever one thing has happened very well; the steward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap some advantage from the caprices of his wife) intended to divide the trees between them. The revenue-office being informed of it, took possession of the trees, and sold them to the best bidder. There they still lie on the ground. Oh! if I was a sovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar, the steward, and the revenue-office!—But if I was a prince, what should I care for the trees that grew in my country?

L E T T E R

L E T T E R L X.

October 10.

ONLY to look at her dark eyes, is to me happiness. What grieves me is, that Albert does not seem so happy as he expected to be—as I should have been—if—I don't much love suspensions; but here I cannot express myself any otherwise.—Heavens! and am I not explicit enough?

L E T T E R L X I.

October 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. To what a world does
the

the illustrious bard carry me! To wander in heaths and wilds, surrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we discover the spirits of our ancestors;—to hear from the top of the mountains, amidst the roaring of the waters, their plaintive sounds issuing from deep caverns, and the sorrowful lamentations of a maiden who sighs and dies on the mossy tomb of the warrior by whom she was adored! I meet this bard with silver hair; he wanders in the valley, he seeks the footsteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon as she sinks beneath the

waves of the foaming sea, the memory of time past, strikes the mind of the hero;—those times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves—when the moon shone upon his bark, laden with the spoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph—when I read in his countenance his deep sorrow—when I see his sinking glory tottering towards the grave—when he casts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, “The traveller will come, he will come who has seen my beauty, and he will ask, where is the bard, where is the illustrious son of Fingal? he will walk

over my tomb, and he will seek me in vain!"—Then, O my friend! I could instantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my sword, and rescue my prince from long and painful languor, and afterwards plunge it into my own breast, to follow the demi-god whom my hand set free.

L E T T E R LXII.

October 19.

ALAS! the void, the fearful void I feel in my bosom—Sometimes I think, if I could but once, only once press her to my heart, I should be happy.

L E T T E R L X I I I .

26th October.

I AM convinced, my dear friend, more and more convinced, that the existence of any one being whatever is of little, very little consequence. A friend of Charlotte's came just now to make her a visit: I withdrew, and took up a book in the next room; but I could not read, and therefore I write to you. I hear their conversation: they are only talking of the news of the town; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill. "She has a dry cough and frequent faintings; she cannot recover," says one. "N. is very ill too,"

too," says Charlotte. "He begins to swell already," answers the other : And my imagination suddenly carries me to their sick beds ; I see them struggling against approaching death, in all the agonies of pain and horror. I see them—And these good little women are talking of it with the same indifference that one would mention the death of a stranger.— And when I look at the apartment in which I now am, when I see Charlotte's apparel lying round me ; here upon this little table are her earrings, Albert's papers, all the things which are so familiar to me, the very inkstand I now use ; and that I think what I am to this family—every

thing—my friends esteem me, are made happy by me, and my heart cannot conceive that any thing could exist without them ; and yet if I was now to go, if I was to quit this circle, would they feel, how long would they feel that void in their life, which the loss of me would leave ? How long—yes, such is the frailty of man, that there where he most feels his own existence, where his presence makes a real and a strong impression, even in the memory of those who are dear to him ; there also he must perish and vanish away, and that so quickly !

L E T.

L E T T E R LXIV.

October 27.

I COULD tear open my bosom, I could beat my head against the wall, when I see how difficult it is to communicate our ideas, our sensations to others; to make them enter intirely into our feelings. I cannot receive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleasure, that I do not naturally possess; nor with a heart glowing with the most lively affection, can I make the happiness of one in whom the same warmth and energy are not inherent.

LETTER LXV.

October 30.

A Hundred times have I been upon the point of catching her in my arms ! What torment it is to see such loveliness, such charms, passing and repassing continually before one, and not dare to touch them ! To touch is so natural : Do not children touch every thing that they see ? and I ! —

LETTER LXVI.

November 3.

HOW often, when I have lain down in my bed, have I wished never to wake again ! and in the morning

morning I open my eyes, I again
 behold the sun, and I am wretched.
 Oh ! why am I not fanciful and hy-
 pochondriacal ? Why cannot I attri-
 bute my woes to intemperate seasons,
 to disappointed ambition, to the per-
 secutions of an enemy ? for then this
 insupportable load of discontent
 would not rest wholly upon myself.
 But, wretched that I am ! I feel it
 but too sensibly, I alone am the
 cause of my unhappiness ; this same
 bosom which formerly contained a
 source of delight, is now the source
 of all my torments. Am I not the
 same man who formerly felt only
 agreeable sensations ? who every step
 he took saw paradise before him,
 and

and whose heart was expanded, and full of benevolence to the whole world. But this heart is now dead, dead to all sentiment : my eyes are dry, and my senses, no longer refreshed by soft tears, wither away, and perish, and consume my brain. My sufferings are great : I have lost the only charm of my life ; that active sacred power, which created worlds around me ; it is no more. From my window I see the distant hills ; the rising sun breaks through the mists, opens wide the prospect, and illuminates the country. I see the soft stream gently winding through the willows stripped of their leaves. Nature displays all her beauties

beauties before me, exhibits the most enchanting scenes, and my heart is unmoved; I remain blind, insensible, petrified. Often have I implored Heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moisten the parched con.

But, I feel it, God does not grant sun-shine or rain to importunate entreaties. Those times, the memory of which now torments me, why were they so fortunate? It was because I then waited for the blessings of the Eternal with patience, and received them with a grateful and feeling heart.

L E T-

LETTER LXVII.

November 8.

CHARLOTTE has reproved me for my excesses, with so much tenderness and goodness!—In order to forget myself, my dear friend, I have for some time past drank more wine than usual—“Don’t do it,” said she; “think of Charlotte.”—The necessary advice to think of Charlotte!—“I do think of you, and yet ’tis not *thinking* of you; you are always before my eyes, you are in my heart: This very morning I was sitting in the place where you stopped the last time—”

Imme.

Immediately she changed the subject. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing, she makes me just what she pleases.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

November 15.

I THANK you, my good friend, for interesting yourself so kindly in what relates to me, and for the good advice you give me; and I beg of you to make yourself easy. Leave me to my sufferings; surrounded as I am, I have still strength enough to endure them to the end. I revere our religion; you know I

I

do :

do: I am sensible that it often gives strength to the feeble, and comfort to the afflicted. — But has it, should it have this effect on all men equally? Consider this vast universe, and you will find millions for whom it never has existed; and millions, whether it is preached to them or not, for whom it never will exist. — Do not give a wrong construction to this, I beg of you. I don't love vain disputes on subjects which we are all equally ignorant of. What is the destiny of man?—to fill up the measure of his sufferings, and drink up the bitter draught.—And if the cup appeared bitter even to the Son of the Most High, why should I affect

I affect a foolish pride, and say my cup is sweet? Why should I be ashamed to tremble in that fearful moment, when my soul shall be suspended between existence and annihilation—when dissolution, like a flash of lightning, shall illuminate the dark gulph of futurity—when every thing shakes around me, and the whole world vanishes away?—This is the voice of a creature oppressed beyond all resource, and who feels with terror that he cannot escape destruction—“My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?”—Should I be ashamed to use this expression?—He who spreads out the heavens as it were a garment, felt terror himself.

LET-

L E T T E R L X I X .

November 20.

C H A R L O T T E does not know, does not feel, that she is preparing for me a poison which will destroy us both ; and this deadly poison which she presents to me I swallow in large draughts. What mean those looks of kindness which she sometimes bestows upon me, that complacency with which she hears the sentiments that sometimes escape me, and the tender pity which appears in her countenance ? Yesterday when I took leave of her, she held out her hand to me, and said, “ Adieu, my dear Werter.”—*Dear Werter !*

Werter!—It was the first time she ever called me dear; the sound sunk deep into my heart: I have repeated it a hundred times since; and when I went to bed, I said, “Good night, *my dear Werter.*”—I recollected myself, and laughed.

L E T T E R LXX.

November 24.

CHARLOTTE is sensible of my sufferings. I found her alone, and was silent: she looked stedfastly at me; the fire of genius, the charms of beauty were fled. But I saw in her countenance an expression much more touching;—the expression of

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G

soft

soft pity, and the tenderest concern.—Why was I withheld from throwing myself at her feet? Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and answer her by a thousand kisses?—She had recourse to her harpsicord, and in a low and sweet voice accompanied it with melodious sounds. Her lips never appeared so lovely; they seemed but just to open to receive the notes of the instrument, and return half the vibration.—But who could express such sensations! I was soon overcome, and, bending down, I pronounced this vow: “Beautiful lips, which celestial spirits guard, never will I seek to profane you.” And yet

yet I wish—oh! my friend, 'tis like drawing a curtain before my heart—only to taste this felicity, and die and expiate my crimes.—My crimes!

L E T T E R LXXI.

November 30.

IT is all over; I see it, my fate is decided. Every thing encreases my woes; every thing points out my destiny. To-day again—

I went to walk by the river-side, about dinner-time, for I could not eat. The country was gloomy and deserted; a cold and damp easterly wind blew from the mountains, and

black heavy clouds spread over the plain. I perceived a man at a distance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongst the rocks, and seemed to be looking for plants. When I came up to him, he turned about, and I saw an interesting countenance, with all the marks of a settled melancholy; his fine black hair was flowing on his shoulders. "What are you looking for, friend?" said I. He answered, with a deep sigh, "I am looking for flowers, and I can't find any." "But this is not the season for flowers," said I. "There are so many flowers," he said, "I have in my garden, roses, and honey-suckles of two sorts, one
of

of them I had from my father ; they grow every where : I have been two whole days looking for them, and I can't find them. There are flowers too above there, yellow, and blue, and red, and that centaury which grows in such pretty clusters ; I can find none of them." I asked him what he intended to do with these flowers. He smiled, and holding up his finger with a mysterious air, said, " Don't betray me, I have promised my mistress a nosegay." " You did well," said I. " Oh ! she has every thing," he answered, " she is very rich :"—" And yet," said I, " she likes your nosegays ?" " Oh ! she has jewels and a crown !"

he exclaimed. I asked who she was?
 "If the States General would but pay me," he cried out, "I should be quite another man! Alas! there was a time when I was so happy; but that time is past, and I am now—" He raised his swimming eyes to Heaven.—"You were then happy!" I said. "Alas! why am I not still the same?" said he, "I was so well, so gay, so contented—I was like a fish in the water." An old woman who was coming towards us, called out, "Henry, Henry! where are you? we have been looking every where for you; come to dinner!" "Is that your son?" I ask'd her. "Yes, my poor unfortunate son,"

son," said she; "the Lord has sent us this affliction." I asked whether he had been long in that state? "It is about six months," she answered, "since he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it; he was one whole year quite raving, and chained down in a mad-house; now he does no harm to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was a very good young man, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand: and all of a sudden he became melancholy, was seized with a burning fever, grew distracted, and is now as you see. If I was to tell you, Sir"—I interrupted her by asking at

what time it was that he boasted of having been so happy. "Poor boy," said she, with a smile of compassion, "it is the time in which he was entirely out of his senses; he never ceases to regret it: it is the time when he was confined and absolutely raving." I was thunderstruck. I put some money into his hand, and went away.

"You were happy!" I exclaimed, as I walked hastily back towards the town; "you were like a fish in the water!" God of heaven! is this the destiny of man? is he only happy before he possesses his reason, and after he has lost it? You are unfortunate, and I envy your lot: Full of hopes you go to gather flowers

ers

ers for your princess—in winter!—
 and are grieved not to find any, and
 don't know why they cannot be
 found.—But as for me, I wander
 without hope, without design, and I
 return as I came. To your disorder-
 ed fancy it appears that if the
 States General paid you, you should
 be a man of consequence; and happy
 it is for you that you can attribute
 your sufferings to any foreign power.
 You do not know, you do not feel
 that your wretchedness is in your
 agitated heart, in your disordered
 brain, and that all the kings and
 potentates on earth cannot restore
 you.

Let their death be without con-
 solation,

solation, who can laugh at the sick
 man that travels to distant springs,
 only to find an accumulation of dis-
 ease, and a death more painful ! or
 that can exult over the depressed
 mind, who to obtain peace of consci-
 ence, to alleviate his miseries, makes
 a pilgrimage to the Holy Land !
 Every step which wrings his feet in
 unbeaten paths, is a drop of balm
 to his soul, and each night brings
 new relief to his heart.—Will you
 dare to call this extravagance, you
 that raise yourselves upon stilts to
 make pompous declamations ?—Ex-
 travagance !—O God, thou seest my
 tears !—thou hast given unto us a
 sufficient portion of misery, must
 we

we also have brethren that persecute us, that would deprive us of all consolation, and take away our trust in thee, in thy love and mercy? The vine which strengthens us, the root which heals us, come from thy hand —Relief and saving health are thine. —Father! whom I know not! —thou who wert wont to fill my soul, but now hidest thy face from me! —call me back, speak to my heart! —in vain thy silence would delay a soul which thirsts after thee! —What father would be wrathful against his son, if he appeared suddenly before him and, fell on his neck, and cried out, “Oh, my father! forgive me if I have shortened my journey, if I am
returned

returned before the appointed time !
 —The world is every where the same :
 —labour and pain, pleasure and reward, all were alike indifferent to me—I find happiness only in thy presence, and here let me remain whatever is my fate !—And wouldst thou, heavenly and adored Father, banish this child from thy awful presence ?

L E T T E R LXXII.

December 1.

MY dear friend, the man I described to you, the man so enviable in his misfortunes, was secretary to Charlotte's father. He
 conceived

conceived an unhappy passion for her; he cherished, concealed, and at length discovered it—was dismissed, and became such as I yesterday saw him.—Think what an impression these few words made upon me! which Albert repeated with as much tranquillity, as perhaps you read them.

LETTER LXXIII.

December 4.

IT is all over, my dear friend; I can support this state no longer. To-day I was sitting by Charlotte; she was playing on her harpsicord with an expression it is impossible for

for me to describe to you. Her little sister was dressing her doll upon my lap ; the tears came into my eyes ; I leaned down and looked intently at her wedding-ring ; my tears fell —immediately she began to play the favourite, the divine air which has so often enchanted me.—I felt comforted by it ; but soon it recalled to my mind the times that are past—Grief, disappointed hopes.—I began to walk with hasty strides about the room—I was choaked—At length I went up to her, and with eagerness said, “ For Heaven’s sake play that no longer.” She stopped, looked steadfastly at me, and said, with a smile that sunk deep into my heart,

“ Werter,

“Werter, you are indeed very ill; your most favourite food disgusts you. Pray go, and try to compose yourself.”—I tore myself from her.—Great God! thou seest my torments, and thou wilt put an end to them!

LETTER LXXIV.

December 6.

HOW her image haunts me! Awake or asleep she is ever present to my soul!—Soon as I close my eyes, here in this brain, where all my nerves are centred, her dark eyes are imprinted. Here—I don’t know how to describe it:—but if I shut my eyes, hers are immediately

diately before me like a sea, like a precipice, and they occupy all the fibres of my head.—What is man ! that boasted demi-god ! his strength fails him when most he wants it ;—and whether he swims in pleasure, or bends under a load of sorrow, he is forced to stop ; and whilst he is grasping at infinity, finds he must return again to his first cold existence.

LETTER LXXV.

December 8.

I FEEL, as those wretches must have felt who were formerly supposed to be possessed by devils.

Sometimes

Sometimes I am seized with strange starts and motions;—it is not agony, it is not passion, it is an interior secret rage which tears my bosom, and seems to seize my throat—Wretch that I am!—Then I run, and wander amidst the dark and gloomy scenes which this unfriendly season exhibits. Last night I felt thus constrained to go out of the town. I had been told that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had overflown their banks, and that my favourite valley was under water. I ran thither at past eleven o'clock : it was a gloomy and awful sight ! the moon was behind a

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cloud, but by means of a few scattered rays I could perceive the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating against the bushes; the whole valley was as a stormy sea, tossed by furious winds. The moon then appeared again, and rested on a dark cloud; the splendor of her light increased the disorder of nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the wind and the waters. I drew near to the precipice; I wished and shuddered; I stretched out my arms, I leaned over, I sighed, and lost myself in the happy thought of burying all my sufferings, all my torments,

2

ments, in that abyſs, and tossing amidſt the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth? why could I not thus have put an end to my miſery?—But I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight ſhould I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and diſturb the waters! Perhaps I may one day quit my priſon, and taſte theſe pleaſures.

I looked ſorrowfully down upon a little ſpot where I had ſat under a willow by the ſide of Charlotte, after a ſummer's walk; that alſo was under water. I could hardly diſtin-

guish the tree, Alas! I then thought of the meadows, the fields round the hunting-lodge; the walks, the green recesses, now perhaps laid waste by the torrent; and the memory of time for ever lost entered my heart. —Thus, to the sleeping captive, dreams recall all the blessings he is deprived of.—I stopped.—I don't reproach myself, I have the courage to die;—I should have.—I am now like an old and wretched woman, who picks dry sticks along the hedge side, and begs bread from door to door, to prolong for a few moments her feeble and miserable existence.

L E T-

LETTER LXXVI.

December 17.

I KNOW not how it is, my dear friend, my imagination is full of terror! Is not my love for her the purest and the most sacred? Is it not the love of a brother for his sister? Did ever my heart form a wish that was criminal?—I will make no vows.—And now a dream—Oh! they were much in the right who attributed contending passions to powers that are foreign to us!—This very night—I tremble as I write it—this very night I held her in my arms, I pressed her to my bosom, de-

voured her trembling lips with kisses. The most melting softness was in her eyes, in mine equal ecstasy.—When I now at this moment recall these transports with delight, am I guilty of a crime?—Oh! Charlotte! Charlotte! 'tis all over;—my senses are disordered, and for these seven days I have not been myself;—my eyes are full of tears;—all places are alike to me; in none am I at peace;—I desire nothing, I ask nothing.—Ah! 'twere better far that I should depart!

[The

[The Editor to the Reader.]

I N order to give a connected account of the last days of Werter, I am obliged to interrupt the course of his letters by a narration; the materials for which were furnished to me by Charlotte, Albert, his own servant, and some other witnesses.

T H E passion of Werter had insensibly diminished the harmony which subsisted between Charlotte and her husband. The affection of Albert for his wife was sincere, but calm, and had by degrees given place to his business. He did not

H 4 indeed

indeed own, even to himself, that there was this difference between the days of courtship and the days of marriage; but he felt a certain displeasure at the marked attentions of Werter. It was an infringement of his right, and a kind of tacit reproof. This idea increased the dissatisfaction he felt from business that was continually accumulating, that was full of difficulties, and for which he was but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on Werter's heart had exhausted the strength of his genius; he had lost his vivacity and his quick perceptions; in society he appeared joyless and flat.

This

This disposition had of course an influence upon Charlotte, who saw him every day ; and she fell into a sort of melancholy, which Albert attributed to the progress of her attachment to her lover, and Werter to the deep concern she felt for the alteration in Albert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in these two friends made their society irksome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there ; and Werter, who perceived it, after some fruitless efforts to desist, took those opportunities to see her, when he knew Albert was engaged. Discontent

and bitterness of heart increased; till at length Albert very drily told his wife, that were it for the sake of appearance only, she should behave differently to Werter, and not see him so often. About the same time, this unfortunate young man was confirmed in his resolution to quit this world. It had long been his most favourite thought, and particularly since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. He had always encouraged it, but he would not commit such an action with precipitation and rashness; he was determined to take this step like a man who knows what he is doing, is resolved

solved and firm, but calm and tranquil. His doubts and struggles may be seen by the following fragment, which was found without any date amongst his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

—Her presence, her fate, the interest she shews for mine, have power still to draw some tears from my wither'd brain!

One lifts up the curtain; one passes to the other side—that is all!
 —And why all these delays? why all these fears?—Because we know not what is behind—because there is no returning—

returning—and we suppose that all is darkness and confusion, where there is uncertainty.

[His mortification when he was secretary to the ambassador, was never effaced from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which did not often happen, it was easy to perceive that he thought his honour irrecoverably wounded by that adventure; and it gave him a distaste for public affairs, and all political business. He then gave way entirely to those singular opinions and sentiments which are to be met with in these letters; and to a passion which

which knew no bounds, and which was destined to consume all his remaining vigour. The continual fameness and sadness of his intercourse with the most amiable and most beloved of women, whose peace he disturbed—his conflicts and struggles—and the seeing his life pass away without end or design, drove him at length to put an end to his existence.]

LETTER LXXVII.

December 20.

I MUST depart!—I thank you for having repeated the word so seasonably.—Yes, it is undoubtedly better

ter that I should depart. However, I do not entirely approve the scheme of returning to your neighbourhood : at least I should like to make a tour in my way ; particularly as one may expect a frost, and consequently good roads. I am much pleased with your intention of coming to fetch me ; I only desire you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and to wait for another letter from me. One should gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight sooner or later makes a great difference. Desire my mother to think of me in her prayers ; and tell her I sincerely ask her pardon for all the unhappiness I have

have occasioned her. I was doomed to give sorrow to all those whose happiness I ought to have promoted. Adieu! my dear, my dearest friend! May all the blessings of Heaven attend you! Adieu!

[The same day (which was the Sunday before Christmas) Werter went in the evening to Charlotte's house, and found her alone. She was busy preparing little gifts for her brothers and sisters, which were to be distributed on Christmas-eve. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the sudden

sudden appearance of the dessert decorated with fruit and sweetmeats, and lighted up with wax candles, causes such transports of joy—"You shall have a gift too, if you behave well," said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a sweet smile.

"What do you call behaving well," said he "my dear Charlotte?" She answered. "Thursday night is Christmas-eve: the children are all to be here, and my father too; there is a present for each; do you come likewise—but do not come before that time."—Werter was struck

—"I desire you will not; it must be so; I ask it of you as a favour; it is
for

for my own peace and tranquillity that I ask it; we must not go on in this manner any longer.”—He turned away his face, walked hastily up and down the room, and muttered between his teeth, “ We must not go on in this manner any longer.” Charlotte seeing the violent agitation into which these words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different questions. But it was in vain. “ No, Charlotte,” said he, “ I will never see you more!” “ And why so, Werter? we may, we must see one another again, only let it be with more discretion. Oh! why were you born with that im-

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petuosity—with that excessive, that ungovernable passion for every thing that is dear to you ?” Then taking his hand, she said, “ Let me beg of you to be more calm ; what a variety of pleasure and entertainment your fine understanding, your genius and talents may furnish you !—Be yourself, and get the better of an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only pity you.”—He bit his lips, and looked at her with a dark and angry countenance. She continued to hold his hand—“ Grant me a moment’s patience, Werter !—Do you not see that you are deceiving yourself, that you are seeking your own

own destruction? Why must it be only me—me who belong to another?—I fear, I much fear, that the impossibility only of possessing me makes the desire of it so strong.” He drew back his hand, and with wild and angry looks fixed his eyes on her—“ ’Tis well!” he exclaimed, “ ’tis very well!—Did not Albert furnish you with this reflection?—’tis a very profound one.” “ It is a reflection that any one might very easily make,” she answered: “ What! is there not in the whole world, one woman who is at liberty, and who has the power to make you happy? Get the better of yourself; look for

such a woman, and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long apprehended for you, and for us all, the small circle to which you have confined yourself.—Make an effort; a journey may and will dissipate you.—Seek and find an object worthy your tenderness; then return here, and enjoy with us all the happiness that can arise from the most perfect friendship.”

“ This speech, my dear Charlotte,” said Werter, with a smile, but full of acrimony, “ ought to be printed for the improvement of all teachers. Allow me but a little time longer,

longer, and all will be well.”—“But however, Werter, don’t come again before Christmas-eve,” she said.—He was going to answer, when Albert came in.—Werter and he coolly saluted each other, and with apparent embarrassment walked up and down the room. They began to converse on different subjects, but without connection, and they were soon dropped. Albert asked his wife about some commissions he had given her ; and finding they were not executed, he made use of some harsh expressions, which pierced the heart of Werter.—He wished to go, but had not power to move ; and in this

situation he remained till eight o'clock; uneasiness of temper and acrimony continually increasing; till at length the cloth was laid, and he took leave, whilst Albert very coldly asked him, if he would not stay supper?

Werter returned home, took the candle from his servant, and went up to his room, alone. He was heard talking with great earnestness, and walking hastily in his room in a passion of tears. At length, without undressing, he threw himself on the bed; where his servant found him at eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go in and take off his boots.

Werter

Werter did not prevent him, but ordered him not to come in the morning till he rung.

Monday morning, the 21st of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found sealed on his bureau after his death, and given to Charlotte. I shall insert it in fragments, as it appears by several circumstances to have been written.]

—It is all over.—Charlotte, I am resolved to die ; I tell it you deliberately and coolly, without any romantic passion. The morning of that day on which I am to see you for the last time ; at the very moment when

you read these lines, Oh ! best of women ! a cold grave holds the inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the last moments of his life knew no pleasure so great as that of conversing with you. I have passed a dreadful night—or rather let me call it a propitious one ; for it has determined me, it has fixed my purpose ; I am resolved to die. When I tore myself from you yesterday, my senses were in the greatest tumult and disorder ; my heart was oppressed ; hope and every ray of pleasure were fled for ever from me ; and a petrifying cold seemed to surround my wretched being.—I
could

could scarcely reach my room—I threw myself on my knees.—Heaven for the last time granted me the consolation of shedding tears. My troubled soul was agitated by a thousand ideas, a thousand different schemes! at length one thought took possession of me, and is now fixed in my heart—I will die—It is not despair, it is conviction that I have filled up the measure of my sufferings, that I have reached the term, and that I sacrifice myself for you. Yes, Charlotte, why should I not say it? It is necessary for one of us three to depart—it shall be Werter.—Oh! my dear Charlotte!

lotte! this heart, governed by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your husband—you—myself.—I must then depart.—When in the fine evenings of summer, you walk towards the mountains, think of me; recollect the times you have so often seen me come up from the valley; raise your eyes to the church-yard which contains my grave; and by the light of the departing sun, see how the evening breeze waves the high grass which grows over me!—I was calm when I began my letter; but the recollection of these scenes makes me cry like a child.

[About

[About ten in the morning, Werter called his servant; and as he was dressing, told him he should go in a few days, bid him lay his cloaths in order, call in his bills, fetch home the books he had lent, and give two months pay to those poor people who were used to receive a weekly allowance from him. He breakfasted in his room; and then mounted his horse, and went to make a visit to the steward, who was not at home. He walked pensively in the garden, and seemed as if he wished to renew all the ideas that were most painful to him. The children did not suffer him to remain long alone; they

they all went in pursuit of him, and skipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Christmas-gift from Charlotte; and described to him all the wonderful things their little imaginations had formed an expectation of. “To-morrow,” said he, “and to-morrow, and one day more!”—and he kissed them tenderly. He was going, but the little one stopped him, to whisper in his ear, that his brothers had wrote fine compliments upon the new-year, —very fine indeed, and very long,—one for papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte,

Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too ; and that they were to be presented very early in the morning on new-year's day.—

This last stroke quite overcame him—He gave something to each of the children, got upon his horse, and charging them to give his compliments to their papa, left them with tears in his eyes. He returned home about five o'clock, and ordered his servant to keep up the fire ; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his coats at the top.—He then appears to have wrote
the

the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

—You do not expect me ;—you think I shall obey you, and that I shall not see you again till Christmas-eve. Oh ! Charlotte, to-day or never ! On Christmas-eve you will hold in your hand this paper ; you will tremble, and you will wet it with your tears.—I ought—I will—I am well pleased that I have fixed my resolution.

[At half an hour after six he went to Albert's ; he found only Charlotte

lotte at home, who was much distressed at seeing him. She had, in conversation with her husband, mentioned with seeming negligence, that Werter would not come there again till Christmas-eve; and very soon afterwards Albert ordered his horse, and notwithstanding the rain, set out in order to settle some business with a steward in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed making this visit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence, and was hurt. Alone, and full of sorrow, she recalled her past life, and found no cause of reproach

proach either in her sentiments or her conduct, or with regard to her husband, from whom she had a right to expect happiness, and who was now the cause of her misery. She then thought of Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A secret sympathy had attached her to him from their first acquaintance; and now, after so long an intimacy, after passing through so many different scenes, the impression was engraved on her mind for ever. At length her full heart was relieved by tears, and she fell into a soft melancholy, in which she was quite wrapt and lost; when with infinite
astonishment

astonishment and emotion she heard Werter upon the stairs, asking if she was at home? It was too late to deny herself, and she had not recovered her confusion when he came in. “You have not kept your word,” she cried out.—“I did not promise any thing,” he answered.—“But for both our sakes,” said Charlotte, “you should have granted what I asked of you.”—She sent to some of her friends, and desired them to come, that they might be witnesses of the conversation; with the idea too, that Werter, thinking himself obliged to wait upon them home, would go away the sooner.

He had brought some books; she talked to him of them, and of some others, and introduced various indifferent subjects whilst she was expecting her friends; but the servant brought back their excuses — one was engaged with company, and another prevented by the rain.

This unlucky circumstance at first made Charlotte uneasy, but the consciousness of her own innocence at length inspired her with a noble confidence: and, above the chimeras of Albert's brain, and conscious of her own purity of heart, she rejected her first intention of calling in her maid; and after playing

ing.

ing two or three minuets on the harpsicord to recover herself, she went with great composure and sat down by Werter on the sofa. "Have you nothing to read to me?" she said. — He answered, "No."—"Open that drawer," said Charlotte, "and you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian; I have not yet read it; I have been waiting till you could read it to me yourself, but for some time past you have been good for nothing." — He smiled, went to fetch the manuscript, and shuddered as he took it up.—He sat down with eyes swimming in tears,

and began to read.—After reading for some time, he came to that affecting passage, where Armin deplores the loss of his beloved daughter.

“ Alone on the sea-beat rock my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries ; nor could her father relieve her. All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the side of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak ; it died away like the evening breeze among the grass
of

of the rocks. Spent with grief, she expired ; and left thee, Armin, alone ! Gone is my strength in the war ; and fallen my pride among women !

“ When the storms of the mountain come, when the north lifts the waves on high, I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon I see the ghosts of my children. Half viewless they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you speak in pity ? They do not regard their father ! I am sad, O Carmor ! nor small my cause of woe ! ”

A flood of tears streamed from

the eyes of Charlotte, and gave some relief to the oppression of heart which she felt. Werter threw down the paper, seized her hand, and wept over it. She leaned on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmost agitation. In this unhappy story they felt their own misfortunes; together they felt them, and their tears flowed from the same source. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and wished to go from him; but sorrow and soft compassion pressed upon her, and weighed her down. At length she

she heaved a deep sigh to recover herself, and sobbing, desired him to go on. Werter, quite exhausted, took up the manuscript, and in broken accents continued—

“ Why dost thou awake me, O gale ? It seems to say, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come : he that saw me in my beauty shall come ; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me.”

[The whole force of these words fell like a stroke of thunder on the

K 4 heart

heart of the unfortunate Werter. In his despair he threw himself at Charlotte's feet, seized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehension of his fatal project for the first time struck her: her senses were bewildered; she pressed his hands, pressed them to her bosom, and leaning towards him, with emotions of tender pity, her warm cheek touched his. Then they lost sight of every thing; the whole world disappeared from before their eyes. He clasped her in his arms, strained her to his bosom, and covered her trembling lips with passionate kisses. "Werter!" she cried,

cried, in a faint voice, and turned her face from him; "Werter!" and with a feeble hand put him from her. At length, with the firm, determined voice of virtue, she cried, "Werter!" and he was awed by it; and tearing himself from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte rose, and with disordered grief, and in a voice of love mixed with resentment, said, "This is the last time; Werter, you will never see me more!" She cast one last tender look upon her unfortunate lover, then ran into her room, and bolted the door. Werter held out his arms to her, but did not dare to detain

detain her. He continued on the ground with his head resting on the sofa for above half an hour, till he heard a noise;—it was the servant coming to lay the cloth. He then walked up and down the room; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and in a low voice said, "Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, only one adieu." He stopped, and listened. She made no answer.—He entreated—listened again; then tore himself from the place, crying, "Adieu, Charlotte! Adieu, for ever!"

Werter ran to the gate of the
town;

town; the guard knew him, and let him pass. The night was dark and stormy; it rained and snowed. He came in about eleven. His servant perceived he was without a hat, but did not venture to say any thing; and when he undressed his master, he found his cloaths were all wet. His hat was afterwards found upon the point of a rock, where it is inconceivable that he could climb in such a night, without breaking his neck. He went to bed, and slept till late next day. His servant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him. He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

—For

—For the last, last time, I now open my eyes. Alas ! they will behold the sun no more ; a thick and gloomy fog hides it.—Yes ! let Nature put on mourning—your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end. Charlotte ! the sentiment I now feel, stands alone in my mind—it is strongly marked ; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream, than when I say, This is the last day. The last ! — Charlotte, I have no idea that corresponds with this word—Last !—To-day I stand upright, I have all my strength ; to-morrow, cold and stiff, I shall lie extended on the ground. What is death ?

death? we do but dream when we talk of it.—I have seen many die;—but such are the limits of our feeble nature, we have no clear conceptions of the beginning or end of our existence. At this moment I still possess myself—or rather, dearest of women! I am thine;—and the next—detached, separated—perhaps for ever!—No, Charlotte, no! we now exist, how can we be annihilated!—What is annihilation?—this too is a mere word, a sound which conveys no idea to my mind!—Dead! Charlotte! shut up in a pit, so deep, so cold, so dark.—I had a friend who was every thing to me in my helpless

less

less youth ; she died : I followed her hearse, I stood by the side of her grave, when the coffin was let down ; when I heard the creaking of the cords as they were let down and drawn up, when the first shovel-full of earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow sound, which grew fainter and fainter, till it was all covered in, I threw myself on the ground ; my heart was smitten, grieved, rent ; but I neither knew what had happened, nor what was to happen to me.—Death ! Grave !—I understand not the words.

Forgive ! forgive !—yesterday—
Alas ! that moment should have
5 been

been the last of my life. I am beloved, I am beloved by her; the delightful sense of it for the first time penetrated, enflamed my heart. My lips still feel the sacred warmth they received from thine. New torrents of delight flow in upon my heart.—Forgive me! forgive me!

Oh! I knew that I was dear to you; I saw it in the first animated look which you directed to me; I knew it the first time you pressed my hand: but when I was absent from you, when I saw Albert by your side, my doubts and fears returned.

Do you recollect the flowers you
sent

sent me, when at a disagreeable and crowded assembly you could neither speak to me, nor hold out your hand? Half the night I was on my knees before those flowers; they were the pledges of affection: but these impressions grew fainter, and were at length effaced.—Every thing passes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguish the flame which was yesterday kindled by your lips, the flame I feel within me.—She loves me! these arms have encircled her waist, these lips have trembled upon hers; she is mine—Yes, Charlotte! you are mine for ever!

Albert is your husband; but what
of

of that? it is for this life only.—
 And in this life only it is a crime to
 love you, to wish to tear you from
 him! This is a crime, and I punish
 myself for it: I have enjoyed it—I
 have enjoyed the full delight of it.—
 I drew in a balm which has revived
 my soul. From this moment you
 are mine—yes, Charlotte, you are
 mine. I go before you, I go to my
 father, to thy father; I shall carry my
 sorrows to the foot of his throne,
 and he will give me comfort till you
 arrive. Then will I fly to meet you,
 I will claim you, and remain with
 you for ever in the presence of the

Almighty. I do not dream, I do not rave; drawing near to the grave, my perceptions are more clear. We shall exist, we shall see one another again; we shall see your respected mother; I shall see her, I shall find her out, and I shall not be afraid to shew her my heart.—Your mother! your image!

[About eleven o'clock, Werter asked his servant if Albert was returned: he answered, "Yes; for he had seen him go by on horse-back." Upon which Werter sent him with the following note unsealed:

" Be

“ Be so good to lend me your pistols for a journey. Adieu !”

The tender Charlotte had passed the night in great agitation and distress; her blood boiled in her veins, and painful sensations rent her heart. The ardor of Werter's passionate embraces had, in spite of all her efforts, stolen into her bosom: at the same time she recalled to her memory the days of her tranquillity and innocence, and they appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her husband, and the pointed irony of his questions, after he had heard of

Werter's visit. She had never been guilty of any falsehood, never had dissembled, and for the first time she felt the necessity of it. Her distress and repugnance made her think her fault more enormous; and yet she could neither hate the author of it, nor even resolve to see him no more. Melancholy and languid, she was scarcely dressed when her husband came in: his presence was for the first time irksome to her. She trembled lest he should perceive that she had been crying and had had no sleep; and this apprehension increased her embarrassment. She received him with a kind of eagerness,

ness, which rather betrayed remorse and confusion, than expressed any real satisfaction. Albert observed it; and after opening some letters, he drily asked her, whether there was any news, and who she had seen in his absence? She answered, after some hesitation, "Werter spent an hour here yesterday."—"He chuses his time well," said Albert; and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The presence of a man she esteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts: she recollected all his kindness, the generosity of his character, his attachment to her; and she reproached herself for hav-

ing so ill requited him. A secret impulse prompted her to follow him; she went to his room and took her work with her, as she sometimes used to do. She asked him, when she went in, if he wanted any thing? he said "No," and began to write: she sat down and worked. Albert from time to time took a few turns up and down the room; and then Charlotte addressed some discourse to him: but he scarcely made her any answer, and sat down again to his bureau. This behaviour was made more painful to her, by her endeavours to hide the concern she felt from it, and to restrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow.

flow. They had passed an hour in this irksome situation, when the arrival of Werter's servant compleated Charlotte's distress. As soon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and said, "Give him the pistols—I wish him a good journey." These words were a thunder-stroke to Charlotte; she got up, and tottering, walked slowly to the wall, with a trembling hand took down the pistols, and by degrees wiped off the dust. She would have made still more delay, had not a look from Albert obliged her to leave off. She then delivered the fatal arms to the servant, without being able to speak a single word;

folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and her heart foreboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes she was upon the point of going to her husband, to throw herself at his feet, and to acquaint him with all that had happened the preceding evening; to tell him her fault, and her apprehensions:—but then she foresaw that it would be useless, and that Albert would certainly not be persuaded to go to Werter's house. Dinner was served; and a friend of Charlotte's, whom she desired to stay with her, helped to support the conversation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the pistols
with

with her own hand to his servant, he received them with transport. He eat some bread, and drank a glass of wine, sent his servant to dinner, and then began to write.]

To Charlotte in continuation.

—They have been in your hands ; you wiped the dust from them : I give them a thousand kisses ; you have touched them. Ah ! Heaven approves and favours my design. It is you, Charlotte, who furnish me with the fatal instruments ; I wished to receive my death from your hand, and from your hand I am going to receive it. I have been enquiring of my servant—you trembled when
you

you gave him the pistols ; but you did not bid me adieu.—Wretched ! wretched that I am !—not one adieu !—In that moment, which unites me to you for ever, can your heart be shut against me ? Oh Charlotte ! ages cannot wear out the impression ; yet I feel that you cannot hate the man who has this passionate love for you.

[After dinner he had his trunk packed up, destroyed a great many papers, and went out to discharge some trifling debts. He returned home ; and then went out again, notwithstanding the rain, first to the Count's garden, and then farther

into the country. He returned when night came on, and began to write again.]

—My dear friend, I have for the last time seen the mountains, the forests, and the sky. Adieu!—My dearest mother, forgive me: my friend, I entreat you to comfort her. God bless you!—I have settled all my affairs; farewell! We shall see one another again, we shall see one another when we are more happy.

I have but ill requited you, Albert; and you forgive me.—I have disturbed the peace of your family; I have occasioned a want of confidence between you. Adieu! I am
going

going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every obstacle to your happiness! Albert, Albert, make that angel happy; and may the benediction of Heaven be upon you!

[He finished the settling of his papers; tore and burned a great many, others he sealed up and directed to his friend. They contained loose thoughts and maxims, some of which I have seen. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him, and then dismissed his servant; who with the rest of the family lay in another part of the house. The
servant

servant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be sooner ready the next morning, his master having told him that the post-horses would be at the door before six o'clock.]

Werter in continuation to Charlotte.

Past eleven o'clock. All is silent round me, and my soul is calm!—I render thanks to thee, O God! that thou grantest to me in these last moments warmth and vigour.

I draw near to the window, my dear friend, and through clouds which are driven rapidly along by impetuous winds, I see some stars. Heavenly bodies! you will not fall:

fall: the Eternal supports both you and me! I have also seen the greater bear—favourite of all the constellations; for when I left you in the evening it used to shine opposite your door. How often have I looked at it with rapture! how often raised my hands towards it, and made it a witness of my felicity! And still—Oh! Charlotte! what is there which does not bring your image before me? Do you not surround me on all sides; and have I not, like a child, collected together all the little things which you have made sacred by your touch?

The profile, which was so dear to me, I return to you, Charlotte; and
I pray

I pray you to have a regard for it. Thousands of kisses have I imprinted on it, and a thousand times have I addressed myself to it as I went out and came in.

I have wrote a note to your father, to beg he will protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, which looks towards the fields, there are two lime-trees ; it is there I wish to rest : this is in your father's power, and he will do it for his friend. Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Christians will not chuse that their bodies should be interred near the corpse of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah ! let me then be laid in some remote valley ;
or

or by the side of the highway, that the Priest and the Levite, when they pass my tomb, may lift their eyes to Heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilst the Samaritan gives a tear to my fate.

Charlotte! I do not shudder now that I hold in my hand the fatal instrument of my death. You present it to me, and I do not draw back. All, all is now finished;—this is the accomplishment of all my hopes; thus all my vows are fulfilled!

Why had I not the satisfaction to die for you, Charlotte? to sacrifice myself for you?—And could I restore peace and happiness to your bosom, with what resolution, with what pleasure

pleasure should I meet my fate ! But to a chosen few only it is given to shed their blood for those who are dear to them, and augment their happiness by the sacrifice.

I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear : you have touched them, and they are sacred. I have asked this favour too of your father.—My soul hovers over my grave.—My pockets are not to be searched.—The knot of pink ribband, which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by your children.—(Dear children ! I think I see them playing round you ; give them a thousand kisses, and tell them the

fate of their unfortunate friend. Ah! at that first moment, how strongly was I attracted to you! how unable ever since to loose myself from you!—This knot of ribband is to be buried with me; you gave it me on my birth-day. — Be at peace; let me entreat you, be at peace!—

They are loaded — the clock strikes twelve—I go—Charlotte! Charlotte! Farewell! Farewell!

[One of the neighbours saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

At

At six in the morning, his servant went into the room with a candle. He found his master stretched on the floor and weltering in his blood: he took him up in his arms, and spoke to him, but received no answer. Some small symptoms of life still appearing, the servant ran to fetch a surgeon, and then went to Albert's. Charlotte heard the gate-bell ring; an universal tremor seized her: she waked her husband, and both got up. The servant, all in tears, told them the dreadful event. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon came to the unfortunate Werter, he was still lying on the floor, and his pulse beat:

but the ball going in above his eye, had pierced through the skull. However, a vein was opened in his arm; the blood came, and he still continued to breathe.

It was supposed, by the blood round his chair, that he committed this rash action, as he was sitting at his bureau; that he afterwards fell on the floor—He was found lying on his back, near the window. He was dressed in a blue frock and buff waistcoat, and had boots on. Every body in the house and in the neighbourhood, and in short people from all parts of the town, ran to see him. Albert came in: Werter was laid on his bed, his head was bound up,
and

and the paleness of death was on his face. There were still some signs of life; but every moment they expected him to expire. He had drank only one glass of wine. Emilia Galoti was lying open upon his bureau.

I will say nothing of Albert's great distress, nor of the situation of Charlotte.—

The old Steward, as soon as he heard of this event, hurried to the house: he embraced his dying friend and wept bitterly. His eldest boys soon followed him on foot; they threw themselves on their knees, by the side of Werter's bed, in the utmost despair, and kissed his hands
and

and face. The eldest, who was his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired ; and even then he was taken away by force. At twelve Werter breathed his last. The Steward, by his presence and his precautions, prevented any disturbance amongst the populace ; and in the night the body of Werter was buried in the place he had himself chosen. The Steward and his sons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no priest attended.]

W E R T E R to C H A R L O T T E,

(A little before his Death).

O Charlotte! Charlotte! all-accomplish'd maid,
 To whom my heart its homage long has paid :
 In whom is center'd all that's good or fair ;
 Whose smiles attractive, whose enchanting air
 To every heart their influence extend,
 And make a *lover*, where you meant a friend :
 Whose ruby lips and melting voice dispense
 Mellifluous sounds with more than manly sense ;
 Whose waving locks and ivory neck impart
 The fairest model for the sculptor's art :
 O lovely Charlotte ! how shall I controul
 The thrilling raptures that possess my soul ?
 How bid my passion yield to Reason's voice,
 When Reason's self must justify my choice ?

Yet, tho' thy charms, the source of every joy,
 My thoughts by day, my dreams by night employ ;
 Tho' thy lov'd image, by gay fancy drest,
 With more than youthful ardor fires my breast :
 Woe to the man that would thy heart beguile,
 And that angelic soul with guilt defile !

Who'd

Who'd dare to violate the nuptial rights,
 (That sacred bond which one to one unites).
 I *love*, but *covet* not good Albert's wife,
 Nor would destroy, my friend, thy peace for life.

But when at length those blissful realms we
 gain,

Where no connubial claims our thoughts restrain ;
 Where selfish, human laws shall cease to bind,
 And universal love reigns unconfin'd ;
 Then, free as air, congenial souls shall meet,
 And sex, with holy rapture, sex shall greet :
 Then will I snatch dear Charlotte to my arms,
 And chafly revel in celestial charms :
 Ecstatic bliss shall grosser love succeed,
 And Charlotte make that scene—a heav'n indeed.

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F I N I S.